

**STATEMENT OF  
CHAIRMAN AJIT PAI**

Re: *Connect America Fund*, WC Docket No. 10-90

Ever since Hurricane Maria devastated Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, we at the Commission have been doing what we can to help restore communications across the islands. That ethos is reflected in today's action.

Going forward, service providers will have greater flexibility in how they use universal service funding to restore and rebuild their networks. And since we've adopted this item so expeditiously, carriers will be able to elect to have accelerated payments begin flowing this month. This should be a boost for both wireless and wireline providers who are trying to restore connectivity.

Thank you to my colleagues for agreeing to adopt this order so quickly. I look forward to taking additional action in the near future to help those in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands recover from this terrible storm. Because what's needed to help the people of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands right now is action, not a hearing or a report.